

Remarks/Arguments

Specification:

With the present the applicant has taken the opportunity to insert on page one (1) of the specification a reference to the parent application no. 09/985,282.

Claims:

The applicant also wishes to cancel old original claims 11 to 14 and 16. Claims 1 to 10, 15 and 17 to 24 remain in the application.

The applicant further wishes to make a number of editorial amendments to the claims as follows:

The applicant further wishes to modify the claims 1, 5, 15, 18, 20, 22, and 24 by deleting the expression “carriage displacement component” and inserting in its place the expression –displacement component--, i.e. to more easily differentiate the “carriage component” and the “displacement component.

The applicant also wishes to replace the phrase ‘driven drive’ in claims 3 and 7, with the phrase ‘driven member’. This amendment is to correct the antecedence of the phrase ‘driven drive’. For support of the amendment please see the similar phrasing in claims 4 and 8.

The applicant also wishes to replace the phrase ‘clutch’ in claims 3 and 7, with the phrase ‘clutch member’. This amendment is so as the make the phrase reflect its antecedent.

The applicant also wishes to insert the missing (punctuation) period (.) at the end of claim 8.

With respect to claims 18, 20, 22, and 24 the applicant wishes to replace all instances of the phrase ‘secondary carriage track’ with the phrase ‘secondary track’, so as to create correspondence between the various references to this element.

The applicant also wishes to amend claim 20 to clarify that *each* of the respective motors provides a driving effort for a respective carriage component. This configuration is discribed on page 27, line 15 and onwards; similarly with respect to each coupling element in claims 18 and 20.

The applicant further wishes to amend claim 24 to amend the phrases ‘respective clutch coupling element’ and ‘respective carriage component’ to ‘clutch coupling element’ and ‘carriage component’ respectively, so as to reflect their antecedents.

The applicant also wishes to amend claims 22 and 24 to indicate that the electric motor element provides a driving effort for the displacement of the carriage component along a respective secondary track.

Information Disclosure Statement

Assignment

Prior art comments

The Examiner in respect of the parent application has rejected a number of the claims among claims 1 to 24 as being unpatentable over U.S. patent no. 5,809,591 to Capaldi et al in view of U.S. patent no. 3,721,324 to Schweizer.

The applicant submits that Capaldi does not teach, suggest nor provide any incentive for the subject matter as described in the remaining claims 1 to 10, 15 and 17 to 24.

Independent claims 1, 18, 22 and 24 describe a person handling system, claim 5 a winch assembly, and claim 15 a carriage assembly, respectively comprising, inter alia, a carriage component(s), an electric motor element(s), and a clutch coupling element(s), said clutch coupling element(s)

...being configured for coupling and de-coupling said electric motor element and carriage component such that

when said electric motor element and said carriage component are coupled and said electric motor element is energised said carriage component may be urged along said track by said electric motor element and

when said electric motor element and said carriage component are de-coupled said carriage component may be manually displaced along said track.

Claim 20 has an analogous clutch coupling element characterization.

The applicant submits that the Capaldi reference **does not** teach, suggest nor provide for any incentive, **whatsoever**, for the systems or assemblies specified in claims 1, 5, 15, 18, 20, 22 or 24. The applicant wishes to draw the Examiner's attention to column 4, lines 63 to 67, and column 5, lines 1 to 13 of this reference. The embodiment mentioned in column 4 does not have an electric motor available for displacing the trolley laterally. Additionally, for the alternate embodiment described in column 5, the trolley is coupled with a motor for lateral movement, but no mention nor any suggestion is made of a clutching mechanism for allowing the trolley to be moved, **as desired, either manually or by motor.**

Accordingly, as mentioned above, the applicant submits that the Capaldi reference **does not** teach, suggest nor provide any incentive, **whatsoever**, for the exploitation of the clutch mechanism of claims 1, 5, 15, 18, 20, 22 and 24; claims 1, 5, 15, 18, 20, 22, and 24 therefor relate to subject matter which is patentably distinct therefrom.

The Schweizer reference does relate to a clutch mechanism. However, the applicant submits that the Schweizer reference **does not** teach, suggest nor provide any incentive, **whatsoever**, for the exploitation of a clutch mechanism described therein, in relation to the subject matter of claims 1, 5, 15, 18, 20, 22 and 24.

Accordingly, the applicant submits that if the Capaldi reference or the Schweizer reference are read alone **or even** if they are read together, the subject matter of claims 1, 5, 15, 18, 20, 22, and 24 is patentably distinct therefrom. Similarly, the applicant submits that the subject matter of the remaining dependent claims is patentably distinct from the above mentioned references.

The Examiner in respect of the parent application has also rejected a number of the claims among claims 1 to 24 and as being unpatentable over U.S. patent no. 5,809,591 to Capaldi et al in view of U.S. patent no. 4,243,147 to Twitchell et al (for example dependent claim 2 as well as other dependent claims adding the same subject matter as claim 2).

Claim 2, which is dependent on claim 1, relates to a system which in addition to the above mentioned clutch coupling element further comprises rechargeable battery means, battery recharge station means and means for automatically bringing the rechargeable battery means into electrical connection with the battery recharge station.

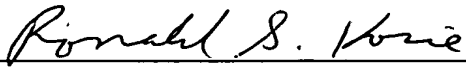
As mentioned above, the applicant submits that the Capaldi reference does not disclose nor suggest the exploitation of a clutch coupling element (e.g. as set forth in claim 1) for allowing the trolley to be moved, **as desired, either manually or by motor.**

Thus, the applicant submits that even if the Twitchell reference is read together with the Capaldi reference, the Twitchell, does not provide any suggestion nor incentive, **whatsoever**, for the system as set forth in claim 2 which is a **combination of all** of the elements of claim 1 and claim 2, namely a system exploiting a clutch coupling element (e.g. as set forth in claim 1) for allowing the trolley to be moved, **as desired, either manually or by motor.** The applicant therefore submits that claim 2 is patentably distinct from Capaldi even if read in light of Twitchell. The applicant further submits that, for the same reasons given with respect to claim 2, claims 6, 10, 19, 21, 23 and 25 are likewise patentably distinct from Capaldi even if read in light of Twitchell.

In light of the above amendments and comment, favourable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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